

# CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF

POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

*Fourth Series*

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 599.

SATURDAY, JUNE 19, 1875.

PRICE 1½d.

## MORLEY FELL.

### IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

In the whole of Westmoreland there is not, perhaps, a more beautiful bit of scenery than the Vale of Waterthwaite, and yet there is no place in the wide, wide world which Harry Vernon, a few years back, asserted to me he cared less to think about, and yet which more engrossed and occupied his mind. There it was, however, that he occasionally had spent some of the happiest days of his school-boy life, for thither, during both the midsummer and Christmas vacations, he was accustomed to run down from town, where his father drove a trade and prospered well, not 'in skins of cats,' but as a lawyer, to his old uncle, who not only kept a good table, but one or two good hacks, which Harry was glad enough to mount, when one or other of the packs of harriers was astir that were kept by gentlemen in the neighbourhood.

The little town or village of Waterthwaite, from which the valley takes its name, is comparatively little known, although several good trout streams, besides an average amount of good moorland for grouse, might induce many to take advantage of its natural resources, and there while away their brief holiday, gun or rod in hand. Rabbits also, as in most parts of favoured Westmoreland, abound; and so young Vernon, who knew how to enjoy most of the good things of this life, ought to have looked back with pleasure in after-time on the days he had passed at Waterthwaite. Indeed, for several years he could never say enough in praise of his pleasant trips down to Westmoreland, as many of his quondam schoolfellows could testify. But few indeed knew how a few hours changed the whole current of his thoughts, nay, the whole tenor of his life, from an incident that befell him during necessarily the last time he staid at his uncle's house.

Poor Harry! we were always chums, and to me alone he intrusted the sad story of his earlier life. The heat of India, where he was ordered with his regiment some years ago, finished him up; he

came home with a broken constitution, which quite seemed to give way, when, on seeking his father's house in London, he was met with the sudden news of his parent's death, which occurred a month previous to his landing; and almost at death's door, he confided to me the events of his past life, a life, once bright, suddenly struck down, and apparently now ebbing away into eternity. How deeply was I moved after hearing the tale I am about to relate! I first made Vernon's acquaintance at school, and as we were in the same class, consequently doing the same work, and also both in the first eleven, we naturally were thrown together, and acquaintance soon ripened into firm friendship. He was a tall, athletic young fellow, and his charges in football became a matter of history in the school after he had left. No one with a good heart could have helped liking him, though there were some half-dozen bullies who were glad to hear that he would not turn up again next half, but the school in general were grieved at his departure. He too felt sorry enough to leave the old place, where he had experienced so many pleasant terms; but go he felt he must, for his nineteenth birthday was close at hand, and it was high time that he devoted a year to hard reading with a private tutor before going in for examination, as, to tell the truth, he cared more for his bat than for his books when with me at Penford under good old Dr Williams. The half-year came to a close. On the morning following the breaking-up, Harry accompanied me to the station to see me off, as my train started about two hours sooner than the one which carried him to King's Cross.

'Well, old man, the best of friends must part,' I said, as I took my seat in the down train for Yorkshire.

'Ah! but I shall in a month's time be down at Waterthwaite,' he cried, as the train began to move off, 'and I will tell my uncle to expect you any time this holidays; you must come.'

With a promise that I would if I could, which, unfortunately, most unfortunately, I now believe, I was unable to fulfil, I retired from the window to the perusal of my penny paper. Little did

I imagine that the next time I saw him I should see quite a different being from the joyous young fellow who had just now parted from me. And, curiously enough, it was in another railway station that I saw him next, about a twelve-month after this, just for a few minutes. I was struck instantly by the great change not only in his face but in his general appearance; even his walk was not the same. To my anxious inquiries, he replied that he had not been very well; but I could see that something had happened, and that at the same time my questions seemed out of place, and painful to him. Although his manner was constrained, still the warm friendship he had previously entertained for me did not seem to have waned, and when I chided him for not writing, he said he hoped soon to have done with all book-work, which had kept him much engaged; and that, when once in the army, he was going to try to get to India, where 'you will be sure to hear from me all about tiger-hunting and pig-sticking, and all sorts of queer adventures.' I never got a line; and the first intelligence I had of his having actually gone out to India, and having returned again after a lapse of three years, was from himself, in a note scrawled in these words:

DEAR LAWRENCE—I daresay you have forgotten me, but if so, it's my own fault. I have just returned home from India on sick-leave, to find that my dear old father a month ago was committed to the grave. I am quite broken down; the doctors give me little hope of recovery; I feel it's true, and I'm glad of it. Do come up and see me, if you are still alive. God grant this may find you. Don't write, but come at once; do not disregard the wish of a dying man and your old chum,  
HARRY VERNON.

As you may well imagine, I was awfully shocked; and it was not until I was being whirled away by a fast express towards London, with a small portmanteau packed with such few necessities as I should require, that I was able to reflect calmly on my sudden and mysterious summons. I had almost forgotten my quondam schoolfellow, inasmuch as nothing ever served to call him to mind, except, perhaps, an old cricket-bat he had pressed upon me in days of yore, and which I never now handled. At first, when I used to look out for the letters that never came, I pictured him as a good type of the insincerity of this world; but for a long time he, of all people, perhaps, had least entered my thoughts. But now, as my mind dwelt on the strong and hearty young fellow, whom I had once so intimately known, the memories of old days flooded upon me. Again I felt myself at school; again I seemed to hear young Vernon's cheerful voice, and felt a glow of friendly exultation thrill through me as he 'drove hard to the off' for a sixer in an all-important match; again I heard his hearty greeting, and felt the hard squeeze of his hand, with which we always met again at school; and now, the tears started to my eyes, and all my old affection for him leaped up again within my heart. Never seemed a train to go more slowly, but at last there we were face to face. I don't know what Harry felt, but I felt as though I would, if I could, have given all in the world, and gone forth a beggar, to have seen him then as in former days, when he could always, either in boxing or wrest-

ling, lay me on my back. But now—his fine form wasted away, his features pinched, and limbs shrunk—he seemed as helpless as a baby. He started up in bed, as soon as he perceived me at the door, but sinking back again from weakness, he exclaimed: 'Thank God! thank God! I knew you would come; you are my old chum still.' Our emotion prevented more for the present. All through that summer's evening I sat by his bedside, and we talked about many things, although every now and then his valet, fondly attached to him, would make some excuse for entering the room, to busy himself about his young master's comfort, while he impressed upon us in earnest, anxious tones the necessity of keeping quiet, and not talking much, 'as it's agen doctor's orders, if you please, sir.' I forebore, of course, from asking if he had any particular reason for having so suddenly summoned me to his bedside, apart from the excuse of old friendship, and a feeling of loneliness, now that he believed himself doomed to die. I seemed intuitively to feel that he wished much to disburden his conscience of some sin, or ease his mind by some avowal, before the grave closed over him, and his secret perished with him. For this must be a terrible thought to the dying, that if words which they wish to utter are not spoken soon, it may easily be too late. How sweet a comfort is it, too, to have some one in this world, if only one, to whom one may with safety disclose the hidden trouble that, perhaps unnecessarily after all, fills the breast and pains the heart! Here, then, lay my poor old chum; and his secret, if he had one, I at once associated in my mind with the wretched and changed appearance which I had noticed in him the last time I had seen him, only a year after his leaving Penford. My conjecture proved right. Believing that I was the only true friend he had in the world—his mother, poor fellow, died in giving him birth—he, after much hesitation, had written to me in the manner I have described; and now, after apologising in a most touching way for his weakness, as he called it, in having given me so much trouble, he began to enlighten me as to the true state of his sad case. His story, however, I shall give in my own words, as frequently, from faintness and excitement combined, Harry was forced to stop in his narration. All his misfortunes occurred from that one unlucky visit he paid to his uncle in Westmoreland, at the close of his school career, and which he had pressed me to undertake with him. As I have said before, would that I had done so; I might at least have prevented some of the mischief. After spending, then, a month in town, he had, according to arrangement, run down to Waterthwaite for an indefinite period. Oh, how during the half-year had he looked forward to this visit! His uncle always received him with open arms, and in his uncle's house he not only felt at home, but, after the murky air of London, the pure fresh breezes of the country infused fresh life into his frame. But, what at that time I did not know, there was a greater attraction still. His uncle and aunt, like some others who have no children of their own, had about twelve years ago adopted and brought up the only child, a daughter, of a widowed lady, who, at the close of her earthly career, earnestly commended her little darling, then in her sixth year, to the care of those friends she had best

loved and trusted in her life. They not only accepted, but accepted with joyful pleasure, both the treasure committed to their charge and the responsibility connected with it. Here, then, was the greater attraction. A young lady in her eighteenth year, Maud Hamilton possessed in an eminent degree all those personal attractions and virtues, adorned with which woman has but to speak, and with man, to hear is to obey. The beauty of her face and figure were but equalled by the beauty of her temper and her mind. I will not go further into detail; suffice it that Harry thought her perfection, and I always thought Harry's judgment perfect. Poor Harry, with his frank and hearty manner, was not one to long conceal his love, not that anything had openly as yet been said, but guardians of a treasured daughter are seldom blind. In point of fact, they had for some time past discussed the question, and agreed, that could they see these two united, they would have no anxiety about their darling's future when they themselves had gone. Between Harry and Maud, however, there was no anxiety, no misunderstanding, for Harry knew that if he could once obtain his aunt's and uncle's leave, he had no need to search her heart, for Maud, who, with woman's instinct, felt the depth and intensity of Vernon's love, that shewed itself in a thousand ways, found that she too at length could no longer call her heart her own. He had at last, and that, too, during this very visit, opened out his heart to her, and she in return had artlessly and simply told him all. As Harry said, that evening was the happiest of his life. How soon was the joyful dream to be dispelled, how soon the cup of sweetness to be shattered in his grasp!

It was a few days after this, towards the close of a brilliant August, that Harry one evening sauntered across his uncle's grounds, and then, with quicker steps, commenced a walk of one mile towards a small copse at the foot of Morley Fell, which towered up abruptly to the skies on the side nearest to the wood, although still quite passable by a young and active man, whilst, on the other, an easier slope made that side the one generally preferred by all who wished to gain the top, whence a varied and extensive view might be gained; and to those who know England, both Cumberland and Westmoreland certainly carry off the palm for such views of wild and glorious scenery as can be obtained from Morley Fell. Both the copse and a few surrounding acres, together with the steeper side of the fell, belonged to old Mr Vernon, and now his hopeful nephew was about to test a new double-barrelled breech-loader—one of the many instances of his uncle's kind and generous interest—upon the rabbits, that had had it all their own way at Morley Fell from time immemorial. Naturally, therefore, expecting good sport, he was much chagrined and surprised, after skirting two sides of the wood, and after vainly peering about for some ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, to find that, despite numerous traces of the little fellows, not a rabbit was to be seen. 'Somebody must be about,' was his muttered exclamation, as he plunged into the wood; and coming out, after a three minutes' scramble, on the other side, facing the fell, sure enough there sat a man, apparently tying up a ferret or two in a bag, whilst a powerful lurcher was regarding with interest some half-

dozen rabbits lying at his master's feet. There were not more than one hundred yards between them; and no sooner had Vernon advanced twenty paces, than the dog sprang to his feet with a deep growl; not less speedily did the man seize his string of rabbits in one hand, and a stout cudgel in the other, and spring over a low stone wall close at hand, followed by the lurcher, where he turned round to see the extent of his danger. Apparently satisfied that there was not much, as he saw but one man after him, and that not a keeper, he threw down his rabbits again, and calling his dog close to his heels, awaited Harry, who, excited to greater wrath by seeing the fellow flee, a fact which at once stamped him as a trespasser, had put on a regular spurt to come up with him, and now arrived at the wall somewhat puffed, and in anything but a good humour.

'Holloa! you fellow, what are you doing here, giving me all this bother? What do you mean by it? Do you know you're trespassing?' he jerked out.

The 'fellow,' a powerfully built and ruffianly looking vagabond, evidently puzzled what to answer, grasped his stick all the tighter, and then growled out: 'I warn't a-medlin of you.'

'Confound you! I never said you were. What's that got to do with it? You're trespassing; you know you are. I'll see about this. What's your name?'

'My name, be darned!' shouted the fellow. 'What's yours? What reet have yer a-coomin' about more an me? I've gotten these ere rabbits, and I means to keep 'em,' he added, as he once more laid hold of them, and seemed about to depart.

'Drop them!' roared Harry, as he mounted the wall. 'If you take a single rabbit'—

'If yer tooch ma rabbits, Sandy shall throttle yer,' roared back the villain with equal energy. 'Hie at em, seize em, my lad Sandy!' he cried again as Harry sprang from the wall. There were only a dozen paces between them now, when the savage beast, without any warning, sprang with the fury of a maniac from its master's side at Harry. It was all over in a moment. A puff of smoke, a sharp crack, and there they stood, a remarkable picture. On one side was Harry, his piece presented full at the man's head; on the other was the poacher, literally rooted to the spot with fear, anger, and amazement combined. Between them lay the ferocious Sandy, breathing out his last gasp, shot right through the heart. How like Vernon it was! His boldness and decision did not desert him at a pinch like this, and I believe really saved his life. Harry said afterwards: 'Pluck? Oh, it wasn't pluck; I did it without thinking of it.' But it is just that pluck, in my estimation, which shews itself how, when, or where, as occasion requires, and which is not wanting in the hour of need, which I really call pluck.

'By —, thou shalt pay for this!' at length cried his opponent, advancing a foot, and swinging his club.

'Another step, and you are a dead man,' now came in hoarse but earnest tones from Vernon's mouth. 'You would kill me if you could,' he added; 'and I shall shoot you just as I've shot your dog, in self-defence, if you don't take yourself off immediately.'

Completely cowed, not only by the words and determined voice, but more, perhaps, by the

whole attitude and unflinching eye, which threatened him with instant death, the fellow immediately backed a few paces, and sloping off until out of range, he only halted to shout out some bitter oath, before disappearing altogether in the distance. Harry turned to examine the dog for a minute, 'tremendous still in death,' and thought of the little chance at close quarters he would have had in a struggle with such a beast, especially when a strong ruffian was by with a stake to give him no gentle tap on the skull. He then skirted the wood towards home, and getting one shot at a rabbit, of course missed it, for his nerves were, to tell the truth, a bit shaky now that all was over. On the whole, however, by the time he got to his room, he felt rather merry at the thought of what the good people would say about his adventure at the dinner-table; and at dinner he did tell his tale, and laughed heartily over it; but even his uncle scarce saw much to laugh at; whilst one of the ladies—Harry was rather pleased than otherwise to observe—turned very pale indeed. That very evening also, Mr Vernon despatched a keeper to the place, to see if he could identify the dog; but although the man searched diligently, neither dog nor rabbits were to be found, only a deep crimson patch upon the grass where the scene had evidently occurred.

One week passed away, and Harry, at first really anxious to have a second interview with the savage who would have made such short work of him, had already twice visited the wood in company with the keeper; and his uncle too, out of curiosity to see the spot where the encounter had taken place, had once made one of the party. Three weeks passed away, and with them all recollection of the affair, and Harry, shouldering his gun, once more found himself, towards the close of a September day, on the outskirts of the wood, determined, if possible, to give the rabbits a warm farewell before he returned to town. There were several rabbits out on the feed, and as he sauntered along, getting now and again a really good flying shot at the little beggars as they scuttled towards the sheltering furze, he thought he had never enjoyed anything more, never seen a more glorious sunset, and reflected with regret that this would be the last of his pleasant solitary strolls which he so much delighted in, and which it would be impossible to get elsewhere. Having at length exhausted his stock of cartridges—not anticipating much sport, he had not burdened himself with many—and having strung up his rabbits by ones and twos to convenient trees, intending to send a boy for them in the morning, he paused on the other side of the wood, and gazing rather sadly upon Morley Fell, he thus soliloquised: 'Once more, and now for the last time, do I behold thee! Suffer me but to climb thy shaggy brow, and view around the scenes I love so well. Would I were thee, old fell, to keep a watchful eye upon my darling Maud!' Arousing himself from these and such-like thoughts, and refreshed by the idea of a little muscular exertion, he began to climb, but had not ascended twenty feet, before, with a start and a sensation of nervous apprehension, he glanced rapidly upwards and then around, but nothing seemed to stir but his heart, which beat violently. 'Bah! what a coward I am; I must have been thinking of that affair here before.'

But no; his instinct, as is often the case, was right, and he was wrong. He does not see the danger just at that moment, concealed as it is by the old stone wall, but none the less real danger is menacing him, and now will he have need of all his pluck, of all his cool decision. Had he perceived and understood the peril which was creeping fast upon him, he would not now have stopped to examine that fern peeping from out a niche in the rock, nor plucked the prettiest frond for some one he was so soon to leave. Look how he loiters! will he see his imminent danger in time to avoid it? No; heedless, and with thoughts fixed far away, and mind intent upon the future, he saw not, heard not.

#### A PLEA FOR THE OTTER.

DUMB animals have a great deal to contend with; they can neither rebut nor answer accusations. Too frequently it happens that the 'intelligent gamekeeper' has only to express an opinion of the destructive character of any living thing, to obtain, from his master, carte blanche to go forth and destroy that living thing. In this way many comparatively harmless animals have been persecuted to the verge of scarcity, and the vermin which they usefully preyed upon have consequently increased to become a deplorable grievance. It is, to say the least, a dangerous task to meddle with a link in Nature's chain, every one of which is impressed, more or less, with its mission of binding and strengthening the great order of the universe. But when the fiat of extermination goes forth upon the really innocent, it is the duty of the humane sportsman to hold his hand, and the enlightened naturalist to enter his protest against such descriptions of animal slaughter. At the present moment, happily, a change of feeling is taking place with regard to the otter, an animal which has been from time immemorial charged with fatally grave offences. It has been alleged that he not only kills fish, but makes raids upon the farmyards far inland, to feed on poultry, rabbits, and sucking-pigs, and that he will even hunt wild-fowl, and help himself to a young lamb or kid. Now, there is no proof of any of these charges beyond the otter's natural appetite for fish; and circumstances, lately brought to light, almost conclusively shew the utter improbability of his feeding either upon flesh or fowl, in his wild state.

One of the oldest and most observant of trappers affirms that he has frequently seen otters swimming amongst wild-duck, teal, and widgeon, without their molesting the birds, or taking the slightest notice of them beyond giving them room to pass. So assured was he of this fact, that he says: 'I went one evening and took a man with me who is now living. We sat down by the river-side. Being almost dark, the otter came swimming along the stream, which was not above twenty feet broad; and though it was covered with geese, ducks, divers, &c., yet one of them did not rise on the wing; they only opened in the middle of the river, and the otter came swimming through them, as if a frequent visitor; and when he came to my gun's end, I shot him.' With a view to ascertaining whether or not the otter has a partiality



for meat, a friend of ours opened some hundreds brought to him for the purpose, the result of which went to prove that they touch nothing but fish in their natural state. The truth appears to be, that as the otter gives great 'sport' to numbers of every degree, by its instinctive cunning in eluding the dogs, and when beset, its indomitable pluck in holding on to them with a formidable gripe, and carrying them under water torn and bleeding, such attributes are woven into the charge of an unjustifiable ferocity deserving of punishment, not short of torture by impalement alive.

Men, however, who might be supposed to be the last to have a good word to say for the otter, are now boldly coming forward in its behalf. Not mere 'humanitarians,' contemptuously so called, or sentimentalists, but anglers, owners of salmon-waters, and secretaries of river preservation societies. That the otter does kill an occasional salmon, taking a mouthful from it, and leaving it to the next comer, perhaps a poor cottager, cannot be gainsaid; but the labourer is worthy his reward, and is a most useful one, if, as is now strenuously maintained, he does immeasurably more good than harm in keeping down the generation of eels, almost his especial and favourite food; for eels eat, as soon as deposited, the valuable ova of the salmon.

The otter is an extremely graceful creature, and its habits are interesting; but it is most to be admired when watched in clear water swimming and tacking in undulations by the aid of its tail as a rudder, and surrounded by three or more of its young. It has been compared in form to the polecat, but this is not a happy simile, as its head is more blunt, its fur shorter and thicker, and its feet webbed. It is amphibious in its habits, but if kept under water more than a few minutes at a time, is soon drowned, for to live, it must come up to breathe. It is not so famed in architectural skill as the beaver, but it must be remembered that much that relates to the beaver's residence is fabulous. When in full growth, it is about two feet in length from the nose to the tail, which is of itself fifteen or sixteen inches long, and tapers to a point; in this particular, differing from the sea-otter, whose tail is much broader. In colour it is a deep brown, with a light patch on each side of the nose, and one also under the chin. The throat and breast are ash-coloured, the mouth small, the lips furnished with strong moustaches, and the ears short and rounded. The eyes, which are diminutive, and placed near the nose, have a somewhat vertical aspect, which enables it to detect fish while lying below them on the bed of the river. Its neck is thick; the legs are thick, short, and very mobile in their articulations, enabling them to act with all the ease and effect of fins in the water, in which they have great power, as well by the flexibility of their joints as by the strength and muscularity of their members, and also by the close webbing of the toes, which, extending down to the very point, give them great power in swimming or diving. The otter evinces great sagacity in the construction of its dwelling. It burrows under the banks of streams or lakes, sometimes for a considerable distance, and always makes the entrance of its home under water, working upwards to the surface of the earth, and fashioning three, four, or more chambers, which ascend

from one to the other. Nor does it neglect the important consideration of ventilation, as the interior atmosphere would vary in density as the water rose, but makes a few minute holes for the admission of air, generally contriving that these apertures shall be concealed by the gnarled roots of the stump of a tree, or a thick bush. The female is often followed in the season by several males, and the fights of the latter are desperate, often fatal, but they are said never to utter a cry under any circumstances, although the female does occasionally give a shrill kind of scream, particularly when with young. She has sometimes five at a birth, which takes place in a warm chamber or 'couch' deeply lined with moss, where she rears her little ones with extreme affection, assiduity, and caution; for it is seldom they are discovered, although often sought for. Numberless instances, despite of what has been said to the contrary, might be adduced of the extreme fondness of the mother for her young, in defending which, in many instances, she has been known to lose her life. When her progeny has been caught, and kept in captivity, she has been seen to visit them, taking them fish, and at length encompassing their deliverance by tunnelling from some secret spot to beneath their prison.

There is no authenticated evidence of the otter attacking man or dog, as some have alleged, excepting when grievously driven to bay, and then only when attacked, and in self-defence, while its attachment to man, if kindly treated, is so well known as not to need further confirmation. 'We are surprised to find any writer,' says Blaine, 'questioning the capability, not only of taming the otter, but also breaking him to fish-hunting, fish-catching, and to a faithful delivery of those he takes. Very many well-authenticated accounts of this aptitude are on record.' An interesting one is related by Bishop Heber, who, when in India, saw a number of otters, which, being stationed along the edges of the water, were made use of as hunters of the fish, which they pursued so adroitly as to drive them into the nets, and there only. To shew that they perfectly understood what was required of them, we are told by the bishop that they laid hold on the largest, and brought them ashore. Thus has the otter, like the dog, been made a valuable and obedient servant. Buffon details the habits of a female otter which had been reared on milk until it was two months old, when 'it was afterwards so far led by degrees and necessity to partake of soups, fruits, pulse, animal food, and fish; but which last, in accordance with its original nature, it persisted in rejecting if not fresh. It was as tame as a dog it played and ate with, came when called, but was furious against any strange one which approached it; a dislike it may have learned from its canine companion. It is curious to add that, with its newly acquired taste for a variety of food, it had no piscatory talents, having lost its natural habits thus far in its early domestication; indeed, it would not willingly even enter the water.'

The readers of the *Complete Angler* will recollect that Walton makes Venator, Hunter, and Piscator ask whether the otter is a beast or a fish. Hunter observes that he heard the question debated among many great clerks, and they seemed to differ about it; yet most agree that her tail is fish.

And he continues: 'If her body be fish too, then I may say that a fish will walk upon land—for an otter does so sometimes, five, or six, or ten miles in a night, to catch for her young ones, or to glut herself with fish.' If the otter be fish, it can of course be eaten on *maigre* days. Mr Pennant says that he actually saw an otter preparing in the kitchen of the Carthusian convent, near Dijon, for the dinner of the monks. Those who have tasted the flesh of the otter, however, consider the eating thereof more as a penance than a treat, for its rankness requires the strongest piscivorous appetite to masticate or swallow a morsel. But we are glad to find there are people abroad who like the otter in any shape.

It has been recently attempted to justify the use of the spear in otter-hunting by its being the instrument with which the otter is at once put out of its misery. But this far from agrees with what we have seen and shuddered at. The poor animal has been transfixed completely through its intestines by the instrument, 'from which'—and we quote a work upon otter-hunting—'it is impossible to escape, as the spring-catch opens after penetrating the animal, and the toughness of its hide effectually prevents his releasing himself from it.' The otter is then held up in writhing agony. But that we may not err at a time when these practices are so energetically denied, we will again quote a recognised authority: 'Many casts with the spears, as may be supposed, are therefore made at him without effect. In the meantime, it is not uncommon for the dogs to seize him, and he is then bitten to death; yet not until he has imprinted some serious, and not unfrequently fatal wounds on a dog or two. Although the otter may be bitten, and bitten to death, it is but seldom he is broken up, except to be left exposed to the fury of the hounds, for a considerable time. In all other cases, such is the tenacity of the hide, that it is impenetrable to the common bite of even these vermin-biting dogs. Among the most energetic otter-hunters it is, however, the wish of each to signalise himself by piercing the game with his own spear. It is truly surprising to see how effectually the well-practised sportsman at this chase wields this weapon, in many cases delivering it in such a manner as to pass directly through the otter, and fix him either to the bank, or otherwise to the bottom of the river, from which, however, his dying efforts usually release him. But from the barb-spear itself no exertions can free him, as the barb, or barbs, form an insurmountable obstruction to its extraction. The spear is then recovered, the otter raised on high, and amidst the shoutings of the men and the barking of the dogs, he is thrown to the pack, and left to their mercy.' Are practices of this kind anything short of atrocious cruelty?

Should these authors be considered to deal in exaggeration, we would refer to the works of our artists, generally faithful in their delineations of field-sports, who, at the heel of the hunt, draw the otter raised as above described, writhing in its prolonged death-throes, and biting the spear in its frenzied agony.

An enthusiastic writer upon field-sports tells us that all animals possessing a mephitic nature are designed by nature to be hunted by dogs! This, however, need only be noticed to be dismissed. We have attempted to shew that the otter is a harmless creature, more sinned against than sin-

ning; the helpmate even of man if kindly treated, and which some of our leading water-farmers are willing to confess, is necessary to the welfare of our streams, as aiding in the maintenance of Nature's unerring balance.

## WALTER'S WORD.

### CHAPTER XLV.—LEAP-YEAR.

It was already dusk as Walter and Santoro crossed the camp, and where the few trees grew, the light was so feeble that faces could scarcely be discerned; it was more, therefore, by the stature of Joanna than by her looks that Walter recognised the sister of the brigand chief, as she received him standing in the shadow of some beech-trees. Santoro, in obedience to a gesture from his mistress, had at once withdrawn, and they were quite alone.

'I have sent for you, Signor Litton,' said she, in a strange and trembling voice, 'to say what it does not become a woman's lips to say, though it delights her ear to listen to it. The peril in which you stand, the imminence of it, and—and—something in my own heart, must plead as my excuse: I love you!'

The fact was not certainly unknown to Walter; but the confession of it, made thus abruptly, and under such abnormal circumstances, astounded him—perhaps with that amazement with which an English marriage service credits young persons of the opposite sex. Having heard thus much, he did not doubt that the proposition hinted at by Santoro—that he should save his life by wedding Joanna, while at the same time adopting her profession—was about to be made to him.

'Joanna'—he began.

'Pray, let me finish ere you answer me,' interrupted she, in the same trembling tones, but with an earnest pleading in them that gave them force. 'It cannot be but that you scorn me at the outset, but I can bear your scorn, since it is for your own sake that I provoke it. From the first instant that I saw you, I became your prisoner, though you were mine; my woman's heart acknowledged you its lord; the courage you have shewn, the honour you have exhibited, it took for granted without trial. I should have known them, had I died that moment, as well as now, when they have been proved so gallantly, and at so great a sacrifice. When I shewed you the secret of our cavern, and bade you depart, if it so pleased you, it was but a girl's artifice to shew her trust, for I felt that I ran no risk of losing you that way; and later, when I became, as it were, bail for your returning hither, though it pained me to see you go, I knew you would return and redeem your promise, as certainly as I know it to-day. O signor, what was it but love that told me so! Here, in my bosom, I keep the picture that you drew of my poor self; but nearer yet, and within my heart, is your own image, and will remain there to my dying day, though that indeed will be soon, if you die. Oh, why'—here her voice grew passionately earnest, though her tone was little above a whisper—'should we speak of death, we two, when it can be averted from us both!'

'I see not how, Joanna,' answered Walter gravely.

'Ah, but I can shew you how. For your sake, I am content to give up—it is not much, you will say, but it is all I have—my place among my people, and its power; to exchange this free air and untrammelled life, for an existence that must needs seem cramped and submissive; my native land for yours; if only you will let me call you mine! Oh, do not scorn such love!'

She stopped for an instant, overcome with emotion, and Walter said: 'I do not scorn it, Joanna.'

'I thank you, signor, even for that much of kindness,' continued she submissively. 'I pray you hear me out. Corrali, look you, though he is black in your eyes, is my brother, dear to me as the only kin I have, and one who has avenged my wrongs; yet, to wed you, I will desert him, returning evil for good. I have no bent for this dishonest life; my hand is free from blood, and it is yours if you will but please to accept it. I cannot flatter myself, alas! that you would do so, if you were free to choose, but since it holds your life in it, signor, my love may help to make it worth your taking.'

During the latter part of Joanna's appeal, the passionate eloquence with which she had at one time urged it had quite failed her, though the plaintive tenderness still lingered. Doubtless she read in Walter's face not only that her love was unreturned, but that it could never be so. Or perhaps the humiliation of having to offer so huge a bribe, for what she would have fain obtained without the asking, quenched all her natural fire. This despondent pleading, however, by no means lost her ground with him to whom it was addressed. Walter had, it is true, no love to give her; but he had pity, which is said to be akin to it; and gratitude, which tends towards it; while, above all, the natural desire for life—life almost at any price—was pulling at his heart-strings. If he should promise to wed Joanna, he would hardly be forsworn, since to the girl he would have wed he was already dead—or would be so in a few hours; marriage with Lilian was an impossibility; then why not save his life, by marriage with Joanna? Men marry every day without affection, to gain much less; nor in his case—a mere Bohemian without kith or kin—were the social objections to such a union—stupendous as they would have been with some men—by any means unsurmountable. The only member of society who was likely to have any voice in the matter—namely, Jack Pelter—would probably hail with enthusiasm the addition of a female brigand chief to their *ménage* in Beech Street; or regard her at worst as a gratis model of the Salvatore Rosa class, and an admirable addition to the establishment. These thoughts, practical and even humorous, flashed upon Walter's brain, in spite of himself, though death was hovering over him, and genuine if misdirected love was demanding a final answer to its appeal. But they came and went in a second of time, and left him calm and steadfast. As to purchasing his personal safety at this price, or any price, that, had it stood alone, would have been his own affair, to be settled with his own conscience. He was not so quixotic as to hold Lilian's love as pledged troth, when death itself had put in, as it were, a priority of claim to him; in any case, he could not be Lilian's, and therefore it was unreasonable that he should accuse himself of faithlessness in wedding another. But there was a feature in this case which made it easy

indeed for him to come to a just decision. How was it possible for him to return to Palermo a free man with such news as he would have to bring with him? Could he tell Lilian that he had saved his life, on the condition of marrying Joanna, but had left her father to perish by unheard-of tortures at the hands of men made still more furious by his own escape? Would not the twofold woe be her death- doom, and the life he had thus basely purchased for himself, become intolerable, from shame, as that of Sir Reginald himself? He had not the shadow of a doubt of it, and therefore no hesitation as to what it became him to reply.

'Joanna,' said he, 'so far from scorning the love which you offer me at so great a sacrifice to yourself, I am deeply sensible of it, and thank you for it with all my heart; but the last words spoken by yonder unhappy man: "Do not leave me, Walter," and which are still ringing in my ears, have greater force than even those which promise me life and liberty. I cannot accept these gifts, for they would be worthless to me, since they would have been purchased by the desertion of my friend.'

For a full minute Joanna was silent; then she took a step towards him, and laid her hand upon his shoulder. 'Walter,' she said, 'rather than lose you I will save your friend. It will be difficult, and very dangerous, but I will do my best to do it. I had promised to desert my brother, though you will not desert this man, who is not even of your blood; but I will do yet more—I will play Corrali false, and rob him of what he holds to be his just revenge. For your sake, and to win you for my own, I will become a traitress. This very night—nay, within this very hour, for we have no time to lose—I will place you both in safety, if you will pass your word to be my husband. Oh, what can woman's love give more? Hark!'

Through the stillness of the night was heard the firing of musket-shots at a great distance. 'Yonder Corrali speaks. He will be up here shortly, wild with rage and loss. No power of mine will then avail to save you. Quick, quick! give me your Word.'

Again a torrent of contending thoughts swept through Walter's brain. The circumstances in which he was now placed had become strangely altered. If Joanna could carry out her present offer, Lilian would lose indeed her lover (though not, alas, his love), but she would at least have left to her her father. It would be no longer for his own sake, but for hers, that he would become another's. His hand he could not offer her, but in its place he would give her her father's life.

Again was heard a dropping fire of musketry, but the sound was more distinct. The combatants were evidently coming nearer.

'Walter, your hand?' whispered Joanna eagerly; 'in a few minutes more it may be too late.'

'I give it you, Joanna. If you will save the old man's life, I promise to make you my wife.'

Never surely was betrothal made under circumstances so ill-assorted and inapt; nor was there one moment to spare for its tender ratification.

'Santoro, Colletta,' cried Joanna in loud and commanding tones, 'let both the prisoners be fast secured.'

This was done at once, with ropes that bit into their arms; and helpless as infants, Walter and Mr Brown were placed side by side upon the

ground. The brigands crowded round them with wrathful and excited looks, which the noise of the firing had doubtless evoked; they imagined that vengeance was already to be taken upon their wretched captives.

'Corralli is beset down yonder,' exclaimed Joanna, 'and we must send him succour. Now these men are bound, we women are their masters, and can be left to guard them. Let each take his musket and do his part; and when it is done, you will find us here in charge.'

There was an instant of hesitation, but used to the habit of obedience, the men moved to where the arms were piled, and each one took his weapon. Santoro alone remained standing beside the women.

'Get you gone, Santoro; it is you who will be in command till you join my brother,' said Joanna imperiously.

'No, signora; I remain here at all hazards,' answered he in low significant tones.

'You disobey, then, my express orders?'

'For the present, signora, yes. I venture to think the captain would wish the prisoners to be left with a stronger guard than yourself and Lavocca.'

'If you remain, you will do so at your peril.'

'That I quite understand, signora. Corralli will decide when he comes up the hill again as to which of us was in the right.'

By this time the band were ready to march, and, in their presence, all controversy was to one, at least, of the disputants out of the question.

'You will obey Colletta, men, till you fall in with the captain,' said Joanna steadily; 'upon second thoughts, I will keep Santoro to guard the camp.'

'Good!' exclaimed Colletta, who was well content to find himself in the unwanted position of commander. 'There is no knowing what prisoners may not be up to.—Now, then, my fine fellows, step out.' And off started the brigands at their 'double,' which was a run about twice as fast as that used by regular soldiers, and, of course, without the least pretence of order, which, indeed, the nature of the ground would itself have rendered impossible. Santoro watched them disappear, then with a grim smile turned round upon Joanna: 'It was well schemed, signora; but I am not quite such a fool as Lavocca has doubtless represented me to be.'

'On the contrary, Lavocca has always spoken well of you in that respect. "You have plenty of wits," she says, "but, unfortunately, no heart."'

'No heart? I, who love her with all my soul, and would lay down my life for her!'

'Oh, she has heard you say that, doubtless, perhaps a thousand times. But when it comes to the proof of your affection, then it is that you are found wanting.'

'Begging your pardon, signora,' answered the brigand, reddening, 'and with all due submission to you as Corralli's sister, you are speaking what is not the truth.'

'You talk of submission, and yet you remain here in defiance of my orders!' returned Joanna contemptuously. 'You talk of love, and yet it was Lavocca's wish, as well as my own, that we should be left alone here!'

'Ay; to let those birds yonder out of the cage, or, at all events, the one that, to your ear, seems to sing so sweetly. You would doubtless find your

own account in such a plan, signora; but what advantage would it be to Lavocca, who would only share the transgression and the punishment?'

'It is love, then, and not duty, that keeps you here, Santoro?'

'It is both, signora,' answered the brigand, smiling, for, at a sign from her mistress, her companion drew near, whose presence to his rugged nature was as the sun that draws from a barren soil unlooked-for signs of graciousness and fertility: 'it is duty to yourself, and love for Lavocca.'

'Then what I have now to ask of you, Santoro, will be easy to grant,' continued Joanna. 'It is my intention to set loose these captives, and lead them to Palermo. You may oppose it, of course, but it will be at the loss of one of our two lives; and if you should kill me, you will not find it easy, I think, to win Lavocca.'—

'I would not marry him, if he did, though there was not another man in the world,' interposed Lavocca resolutely; 'I would even rather marry Corbara.'

'She would marry Corbara!' exclaimed Santoro, lifting up his hands, as if in appeal to universal nature against an idea so monstrous.

'But, on the other hand,' continued Joanna, 'if you will come into our plans, and assist us to escape, Lavocca will marry you as soon as we set foot in the city. A free pardon will easily be obtained for us, in consideration of this service to the Englishmen.'—

'And your brother would flay us alive before the week was out,' interrupted Santoro.

'If he caught us; I don't doubt that in the least,' answered Joanna. 'But milord yonder will place you on board his yacht, and you will never leave it, until you and your wife are landed in England, where he will provide for you handsomely. Of course, there will be danger in getting down the mountain; but if you will not run some risk to win Lavocca, you, who were talking about laying down your life for her'—

She did not finish the sentence, because Lavocca had with the most opportune judgment precipitated herself into her lover's arms, and he was covering her comely face with kisses: the noise they made, however, was so very slight, that Joanna felt justified in taking it for the silence that gives consent. 'Come, come,' said she; 'you will have leisure enough for that to-morrow. You must earn your reward, Santoro, before enjoying it!' Yet, nevertheless, she left the fond pair together while she flew across the camp, and with a sharp knife cut the ropes that bound the prisoners, at the same time whispering a few words into Walter's ear.

'Is it then come at last?' cried the old merchant feebly: 'is death awaiting us?'

'No; life and freedom, if you have only the courage to take advantage of the opportunity,' replied Walter. In the excitement of the moment, he had almost forgotten the price he had agreed to pay for them, and had bounded to his feet like a deer. 'Give me a weapon, Joanna.'

She drew a pistol from her belt, and gave it him. 'Santoro yonder is on our side, dearest, and will lead us down the mountain. If we part again, it will not be your death alone that will separate us, but mine also.'

He answered, not with the caress which perhaps she expected, but with a silent pressure of his hand.



## CHAPTER XLVI.—THE ESCAPE.

In a few minutes the whole party had left the camp and plunged into the shadow of the trees that thickly covered the mountain, and which at that hour as effectually concealed them as though the earth had swallowed them up. The foliage, however, was intermittent; large spaces of exposed ground had presently to be crossed, where the dusk of a Sicilian night afforded them but a scanty cloak; and when this happened, Santoro and the two women walked in advance, that their dress might deceive the eyes of their late comrades, and cause them to be taken for a portion of the band under Colletta. They were only too likely to fall in with some of these, since it was the brigand habit when entering into action to scatter in pairs; though, on the other hand, this might enable the fugitives to overcome opposition. Having once embraced their cause and his Lavocca, Santoro could be depended upon to fight for them, and, indeed, he had gone too far to render return to his original allegiance possible. His untiring step fell as noiselessly upon the rock as on the turf, his keen eyes roved from tree to tree with unceasing vigilance, and, though the night was cloudy and their way without a path, he never lost the true direction of their course; only, when shots were heard, he would stop and listen, and turn to the right hand or the left, in order to avoid the combatants, from whose neighbourhood they were still, however, at a considerable distance. Three out of his four companions, albeit two were women, took step for step with his own; but for the fourth—Mr Christopher Brown—the whole party had not seldom to halt, while he panted for breath, or begged for a drop of water to quench his thirst. His age and constitution were but ill fitted for a night-march of such speed and duration, and, moreover, the terrors and privations of the previous fortnight had much enfeebled his frame. In his own mind, Walter felt but too sure that in case of their having to fight their way, the poor merchant must needs succumb to adverse fate, and would never survive to enjoy that liberty which he had so loyally striven to procure for him.

They had descended about two-thirds of the mountain, and, consequently, had reached what was the most dangerous part of the journey, namely, the locality where, in all probability, the brigands' line intervened between them and the troops, when suddenly 'the call' was heard very soft and low, immediately in front of them. Walter and Mr Brown, who were just issuing from a copse into an open space, at once stepped back among the trees; but the three others, who had advanced farther, and whose appearance had doubtless evoked the signal, moved boldly on, Santoro, with admirable presence of mind, at the same time giving back the answering note. The next moment they were confronted by Corbara. Of all the band, next to Coralli himself, this man was the most to be dreaded; for not only was he a most determined and relentless ruffian, and possessed of vast physical strength, but he was especially hostile to Santoro. On the other hand, he was probably unaware of the succour sent by Joanna, and would, therefore, not be so suspicious of her presence as if he had known she had been left in charge of the prisoners; and what was

also hopeful was, that he appeared to be alone. Santoro, who had already loosened his pistols in his belt, would have shot him down at once, but for fear that he might have comrades near him; and the most bitter repentance that he had ever experienced seized his soul because he had parted with his knife to Walter.

'Ha! Santoro, how comes it that you are down here?—and La Signora also!' Here he stepped back with a movement of suspicion. 'What has caused you to leave the camp?'

'We are come to help my brother,' answered Joanna coolly; 'the firing came so quick that I felt he must be hardly pressed.'

'He is only fighting because he likes it,' answered Corbara gruffly; 'for my part, it seems to me that there is blood enough to be spilt for the present, without losing our own in return.'

This was a reference, as Joanna well understood, to the promised fate of the captives, and in her ignorance as to whether they were not even at that moment within sight of the speaker, she felt that her presence of mind was being tried to the uttermost; fortunately, her nerves were like her muscles, strong as steel.

'I hope there has been no loss amongst us?' inquired she earnestly.

'As to loss of life, I don't know, though, when there are bullets singing about our ears as plentifully as birds in June, it is more than likely; but I for one have lost blood enough.'

'Well, here is she who will bind up your wound, Corbara, and give you more comfort than the best surgeon in Palermo,' and Joanna signed to Lavocca to approach the lieutenant. As she did so, Santoro whispered: 'Your knife, your knife!' and the young girl slipped it into his hand as she moved past him towards his rival.

'It is but a scratch in the right shoulder, my dear,' said Corbara, in a tone which he intended to be tender; 'and if you have got a handkerchief — What's that?' A piercing cry broke from the covert from which they had just emerged, and almost at the same moment a groan from Corbara, who staggered and fell forward on his face; a blow from Santoro's knife, struck between the shoulders, had cloven his heart in twain.

'Hark, hark!' cried Joanna; 'there is mischief behind us; see to Signor Litton.' She was herself the first to reach the spot where she had left Walter and his companion, and where were now three persons. The youth Colletta lay on the ground, felled by the butt of Walter's pistol, though not before he had uttered a cry for help, which was already answered to left and right of them; they could even hear the noise of men forcing their way towards them through the brushwood.

'Quick, quick!' cried Santoro; 'straight down the hill every one of you.' And all five ran forward together, though it seemed that such a movement must cast them into the very arms of their foes. Again and again a sheet of flame flashed out upon them, and one at least of their number toppled over. It was not Mr Brown, Walter knew, for he was holding the old man firmly by the arm, and helping him on, as a father helps his child to keep up with his longer legs; and it was not Joanna, for she never left his side, and at each flash seemed as though she would have interposed her own lithe form between himself and

the bullet. Thus they held on their headlong way for a considerable time, when the old merchant suddenly fell exhausted on the ground, with the last breath he had to spare bidding Walter leave him to his fate, since another yard he could not run. Then, for the first time, they missed Santoro. The noise of the firing had ceased; there were no signs of their pursuers; and the gray dawn was slowly breaking over the eastern hills. Yet self-congratulation was by no means the prevailing feeling with their little band.

'Where is he?' cried Lavocca wildly. 'He was close behind me all the way, and again and again bade me be of good courage. If he has fallen into their hands, I will avenge him yet'—and the determined girl had actually begun to reascend the mountain, when Joanna seized her arm.

'He is not in their hands, Lavocca, but with the saints, I trust,' whispered she tenderly; 'I saw him leap into the air, ten minutes back, killed by a bullet through his brain.'

'You saw him die, and yet you ran on? Oh, cruel, cruel!' cried the unhappy girl.

'What aid could we have given him, dear Lavocca? Would you have had us make the triumph of his murderers still greater by becoming their prisoners? His dearest wish, if he could now express it, would be that you should effect your escape. Let us now think only of obeying him, and mourn him afterwards.'

Accustomed to submit in everything to Joanna's will, Lavocca was to all appearance herself again before they resumed their flight; she shed no more tears, but instead of using her former vigilance, kept her eyes fixed on the ground, as though she cared little now what fortune happened to her, and lagged somewhat behind the rest. It was a harsh blow of fate that had deprived her of the being who was so soon to have been her husband, but, as a matter of fact, she had been by no means passionately devoted to poor Santoro; the love, as in her mistress's case, had been almost wholly on one side, only in the reverse order as to sex; and, moreover, Lavocca was a coquette in her way, with no stronger feeling of any kind than that of exciting admiration. Joanna, indeed, was as much grieved as she, at their late companion's death, for she could not but be aware that she herself had been the involuntary cause of it. But on the other hand, now that the pursuit of those whom she had such good cause to fear was over, or seemed to be so, and while the reward, for which she had fought so hard, seemed within her grasp, her heart had scarce room for grief. The dawn had broadened into daylight, and from where they stood, upon a low spur of the mountain, some portion of their city of refuge was to be seen. 'See, Walter,' whispered she triumphantly, as they moved side by side together; 'yonder is Palermo; the troops are not far from hence; but in any case, in one hour more, you will be free, and I shall be bound only by the sweet ties of love and duty.'

The words had scarce escaped her lips, when a line of fire, accompanied by a splutter of musketry, broke out from a small thicket close to the right of them, and she dropped down at his feet like a stone. When the blinding bitter smoke had rolled away, Walter, kneeling by her prostrate form, found himself surrounded by a crowd of soldiers, astonished to see the young Englishman moved to tears by the just retribution that had overtaken one of his

captors. Lavocca, whom they took for a boy brigand, was bound hand and foot; and Mr Christopher Brown was drinking brandy as though it were water, from a flask which the officer in command was holding to his lips.

#### CHAPTER XLVII.—'HE IS WORTH ALL LOVE CAN GIVE HIM.'

Joanna was not dead; but she had received more than one wound, which the surgeon of the detachment pronounced to be very serious. As soon as they were bound up, and she could be moved, a litter was brought, in which she was conveyed slowly towards the town; and beside it walked Walter and Lavocca. A brief explanation of the matter had, of course, been given by the former, and the two women at once divided the interest of their captors with those whom they had been sent out to rescue. Poor Mr Brown, indeed, as he limped along, all dragged and torn, with anything but that smooth, starched look which distinguishes the rich citizens of London, was by no means an attractive object; but since his pecuniary value was well understood, he did not lack attention. Altogether, the procession was a sombre one, very unlike what the return of an expedition should be which has accomplished its object. For the soldiers were aware that they had not only 'encumbered with their assistance' the persons whom they had gone out to succour, but had inflicted a grievous wrong on her to whom the escape of the prisoners had been owing; while Mr Brown was too exhausted, and Walter too overcome with pity for his preserver, to shew any symptom of satisfaction. As she was lifted speechless into the litter, she had feebly held out her hand to him, and he had carried it to his lips, and retained it still. The soldiers thought that the young Englishman was but expressing his gratitude by so doing; but he would have done the same, had it been an open sign of their engagement. He was too full of commiseration and thankfulness to her, to abate one jot of an exhibition of affection which evidently gave her an intense pleasure; nor, whatever his unbidden thoughts might have been, did he permit himself to speculate upon what fortune might have in store for him should her wounds prove mortal. His whole existence was for the time devoted to her; the remembrance of his former life, including even his late experiences while in Corrali's power, were all swept away, to make room, as it were, for the absorbing reflection that this girl had given to him her love, and had proved its genuineness by sacrificing for him all she had—even perhaps to life itself.

At a small village on their way, a mule was found, whereon Mr Brown was lifted, which enabled him to converse as well as keep pace with his late companion.

'Walter Litton, you are henceforth my son, remember, whatever happens,' were his first words, spoken with great feeling. 'I mean,' added he, as the young painter stared at him, half-dazed with woe and wonder, 'whatever happens as respects dear Lilian.'

How strange it seemed that such a communication should give him pain; but yet it did so. He only bowed his head, by way of acknowledgment; then turned to Joanna in terror, lest she should have understood the old man's words.

Whether they referred to Lilian's state of health, or her feelings towards himself (of which he had never spoken openly to her father), he did not know, but it brought her home to his remembrance, and in so doing, seemed to do a wrong to his wounded charge.

'This young woman, to whom we owe so much,' continued Mr Brown, misunderstanding his glance, 'will of course be taken to our hotel, to be tended by my daughters like a sister.'

'Indeed, she deserves no less, sir,' answered Walter solemnly.

Nothing more was said until they drew near the city, when Mr Brown once more broke silence: 'I wonder whether that scoundrel Selwyn will venture to look me in the face?' The old merchant's mental vigour was evidently returning to him, now that he had reached the confines of civilisation; while Walter, who had been the leading spirit throughout their common dangers, felt, on the contrary, more perplexed and subdued with every footfall. Notwithstanding the earliness of the hour, a great crowd, upon whom Joanna's dark eyes rested without seeming to observe their presence, accompanied the procession to the hotel, where the good news had already penetrated, and on the steps of which stood the landlord, to do honour to their arrival.

'Is Sir Reginald Selwyn within?' was Mr Brown's impatient inquiry, delivered in very disinherited tones.

'No, sir; he left yesterday by the steamer to Messina. Her ladyship, your daughter, however, did not accompany him.'

In another minute, ere he reached the head of the stairs, the old man was clasped in Lotty's arms. To his astonishment, and still more to that of Walter, Lillian herself, pale and trembling, and looking like one risen from the grave, was standing at the doorway of the sitting-room. But ere she could shape the words of welcome, her eyes fell upon the litter, as it was slowly borne up-stairs, and concluding, doubtless, that it contained Walter, sick or wounded, her feeble strength forsook her, and she would have fallen senseless on the floor, but for her father's aid. He kissed her tenderly; and then, still hugging her to his breast, observed to Lotty: 'You will have two patients to nurse now, my girl, instead of one.—This is a woman—though you wouldn't think so,' continued he, pointing to Joanna—'and one to whom Walter and myself are indebted for our lives. And here is another young person in male attire. We have been in very queer company of late, as you will conclude; but these two are by far the best specimens of it, I do assure you.'

It was quite curious to see how quickly the old merchant had recovered from his late depression, and how naturally he reassumed the position of host and master, which he had occupied before his late misfortunes. Poor Lavocca, on the other hand, bereft of her lover, alarmed for the fate of her only friend, and overcome by the strangeness of the scene, so different from those of her mountain-life, looked piteous and disconsolate enough, and kissed the hand which Lotty held out to her with grateful humility.

'Now, Walter, my lad,' continued Mr Brown, 'you had better go home and make yourself comfortable, while I do the like, and then come up here to breakfast, and hear the doctor's report. I

have sent for the best in the place; and if money can save her, Miss Joanna shall not want for life, or anything that life can give her.'

Walter would have hesitated to obey this order, for he felt that his place was by the side of the wounded girl, whom he had promised to make his wife; but the arrival of the surgeon, who instantly ordered the patient to be conveyed into the inner room, and the apartment to be cleared, put the matter beyond his power, and compelled him to retire to his lodgings. Here he remained in a strange state of anxiety and suspense, scarcely knowing what to hope or what to fear; now moved with tender pity for Joanna, now filled with still more tender regrets upon Lillian's account; and very ill inclined to listen to the congratulations with which Baccari and his son overwhelmed him, but which gratitude compelled him to acknowledge. For it was indeed to the interest which Francisco had taken in him, and the promptness with which he had acted, upon seeing him depart with Santoro, that his rescue had been due. The lad had entertained some suspicion of his not being a free agent, during those last days he had spent in Palermo, and had watched his proceedings accordingly; had dogged him to the gate of the cemetery, and contrived to overhear the name of the locality where Corrali had pitched his camp. Then, when convinced of the young Englishman's departure and its object, he had hurried to the consul with the letter Walter had left behind him, and had also delivered that for Lillian into the hands of his mistress, her attendant. In consequence of these rapid measures, the troops had been sent out forthwith, with better information than usual as to the direction in which to march, and with orders to surround the mountain. The impatience and fury of Corrali himself had done the rest. But besides sending out the troops, the tidings thus disseminated by Francisco had roused public indignation, not only among the British residents, but with the natives themselves, against Sir Reginald; and it was amid a storm of hisses and execrations that he had embarked on board the steamer on the previous afternoon. He had not indeed been driven to do so by the general indignation; his natural courage would probably have been too high for that; but after having witnessed Walter's departure, he had felt inaction insupportable. To stay in Palermo and await the news of the massacre that he could have prevented by the mere signing of his name, was something that even his iron nerves refused to face; and therefore he had taken his place for Messina. He would willingly have carried Lotty with him, since, in her despair and wretchedness at the coming catastrophe, she was only too likely to drop some hint that would lead to his inculpation; but, on the other hand, to tear her away at such a time from her sick sister, was an act which would set every tongue wagging against him, and still more certainly arouse suspicion. So Sir Reginald had gone alone, to the great relief of all concerned, save the mob, who wished to duck him, and Mr Brown, who—no longer restrained by sentiments of respect for the baronet of the United Kingdom—yearned to give him a piece of his mind.

In the midst of these details came a message from the hotel, to say that Walter's presence was required there at once; he hurried thither, and found Lotty awaiting him in the sitting-room alone.

'I don't understand the matter at all, Mr Litton,' said she nervously. 'Everything has been so strange and terrible, that it may well have done away with my poor wits; but this poor brigand woman, it seems, is dying; and though Lilian is most unfit to be her companion under such circumstances, she has insisted upon being with her, and now you have been sent for to see them both—alone.'

Walter's heart was too full to speak; he only bowed, and followed Lotty through the door that led into the sick-room. She ushered him within it, and then immediately withdrew, taking Julia and Lavocca with her; and Walter found himself alone with the two women, to each of whom—but out of devotion to one of them—he had plighted his troth. Joanna, looking strangely unlike herself in feminine garb, and with features from which the near approach of death had chased every touch of harshness, and left all womanly, was lying on Lilian's couch; while Lilian—with cheeks as pale as those of her companion, and which she in vain strove to keep free from tears—was sitting in an arm-chair by her side. She signed to him in silence to draw near Joanna.

'I have sent for you, Signor Litton,' began the latter, in weak and broken tones; when a gentle hand was suddenly placed upon her arm, and a soft voice interrupted her with: 'Why not call him Walter?' 'Ah, you have a good heart,' murmured the dying girl. 'Yes, I will call him Walter, since it is for so short a time.—Walter, I have sent for you, to bid you farewell. The doctor tells me—though indeed I felt that it was so before he came—that I am dying. It is better that this should be, even on my own account, for what had I to live for save a love that could never be returned; and upon yours, how much better, since it will set you free.'

Walter's eyes were fixed upon her with an ineffable tenderness and pity, as he replied: 'Do you suppose, then, that I wish you to die, Joanna, you who have just preserved my life?'

'No; you are too generous, too unselfish, to wish that; but, nevertheless, my death will make you happy, and therefore death is welcome to me. It was but a mad dream of mine—but I am a poor ignorant foolish girl—that I could ever win your love. I see that now. Yet you won mine, all that I had to give, Walter, and you will keep it still; not like this other one's' (here she smiled on Lilian); 'yet something not altogether worthless to think of now and then, and draw a sigh from you. I hope that I shall not be quite forgotten, Walter.'

'You will never be forgotten, Joanna, while the life that you have given still abides within me.'

'And if I had lived, you would have kept your word?'

'I would have made you my wife, so help me, Heaven!'

'Brave heart, brave heart!' continued Joanna. 'He tells the truth to man and woman.—You knew this before, Lilian, but he did not know you knew.—Give me your hand, Walter. This hand is mine,' she murmured, carrying it to her parched lips, 'and I have the right to dispose of it.—Now, Lilian, give me yours.' Then she took Lilian's hand, and placed it in Walter's. 'You are worthy of him; you will make him happy, as I never could have done. May Heaven bless you both!'

The physical exertion she had used had been very slight, yet she seemed greatly exhausted.

'Indeed, Joanna, you must say no more,' whispered Lilian, caressing her. 'Walter must go away for the present; you are doing yourself harm.'

'As you please,' murmured Joanna with a sad smile, 'though I do not think I can take harm. But before he goes—he is yours now, Lilian; I have made him over to you—may I ask of him to kiss me?'

Walter bent low, half-blind with tears, and gave Joanna his first kiss: it was his last one also; for she died within an hour or so, quite suddenly, in Lotty's arms, whom she took for Lilian, whose scanty strength had succumbed to the late excitement.

'Be good to him, dear,' were the poor girl's last words. 'He is worth all love can give him.'

### NARCOTICS.

THE indulgence in narcotics—something to dull, stupefy, and soothe the nervous system—is a predominant human weakness. Nature has been ransacked for narcotics. Tobacco, opium, betelnut, Indian hemp, even some kinds of fungi, are employed for the desired object. When tobacco was first introduced into Europe, its use was nearly everywhere looked upon with dislike by the authorities. The efforts that were made to suppress it amounted to nothing less than persecution, and their want of success furnishes a curious illustration of the uselessness of legislative interference with the individual's legitimate freedom of action. It serves also to illustrate in some measure the strong hold which the taste for narcotics obtains over the mind, especially as tobacco is one of the mildest narcotics in use. Amongst ourselves, not to mention King James's well-known *Counterblast*, many petty restrictions were laid on the sale of tobacco during that monarch's reign, and the import duty was raised from twopence to six shillings and tenpence a pound. In England and elsewhere, remonstrance and penalties were equally unavailing. Tobacco made its way steadily into favour, and is believed to be now in use among not less than eight hundred millions of the human race.

Measures of a severe nature have been tried in China to check the use of opium, and have been quite as unsuccessful. However apathetic the Chinese may be in respect to most things, they will not submit to the withdrawal of their favourite narcotic. But in case of so dangerous a poison, some restrictions are as much needed as they are on the sale of spirituous liquors amongst ourselves; for the effects of habitual excess are not less deplorable than those of habitual drunkenness. Of forty prisoners confined in the House of Correction at Singapore, thirty-five were found to use opium; and of these, seventeen, who had been in receipt of eighteen shillings a month as wages, spent twenty-four shillings on opium, the difference being obtained by theft. From a sanitary point of view, the results are equally sad. The confirmed opium-eater in the East seldom lives beyond the age of forty, and may be recognised at a glance by his trembling steps and curved spine, his sunken glassy eyes and sallow withered features. The muscles, too, of his neck and fingers often become contracted. Yet incurring even this penalty



will enable him to indulge his vice only for a certain length of time. Unlike the healthy enjoyment which we derive from our appetite of hunger, and which Nature herself renews periodically, the enjoyment of the opium-eater gradually diminishes as his system becomes habituated to the drug. From time to time he must increase the quantity which he takes, but at length no increase will produce any effect. Under these circumstances he has recourse to a dangerous expedient: he mixes a small quantity of corrosive sublimate with the opium, the influence of which is thus for a time renewed. Then these means also fail; when the victim must bear the miserable condition to which he is reduced, until probably, sooner or later, he sinks into the grave. On the excitable temperament of the Malays and Javanese, a strong dose of opium causes a state of frantic fury amounting almost to madness, and this often ends in that homicidal mania which has been called 'running amuck'; in other words, in the individual attacking with his crease or dagger every one whom he meets, so that it becomes necessary to shoot him down with as little compunction as we do a mad dog. In Java, opium is not allowed to be sold except in an adulterated form, the risk of these evil consequences being thus in some measure lessened.

So far as the effects of opium on the system are concerned, it is almost entirely a matter of indifference in what way the drug is used. Whether it be taken in the solid form of pills, in the liquid form of laudanum, or inhaled from a pipe as heated vapour, it speedily exerts its pernicious and almost irresistible influence over the mind; so that few possess the iron will needed to relinquish the habit when it has once been fairly acquired. How completely even the most intellectual and cultivated minds may become enslaved was well illustrated in the cases of Coleridge and De Quincey, whose highly coloured descriptions of their experiences are said to have been productive of much evil amongst the educated classes of this country. These descriptions must not, however, be regarded as safe criteria of the usual influence of opium on the colder temperament of the North European. According to Dr Christison, it seldom produces a more striking effect on the Anglo-Saxon constitution than the removal of torpor and sluggishness, thus rendering the opium-eater a pleasant and conversable companion; but these small advantages, in turn, are purchased by a period of subsequent pain and depression, the misery of which it would be difficult to exaggerate.

Opium, besides acting as a narcotic, possesses a remarkable power as a restorative. By apparently checking the natural waste of nervous energy, it enables the system to support fatigue, beneath which it must otherwise inevitably have sunk. For this reason it is much used by the Halcarras, the palanquin bearers and messengers of India, who journey almost incredible distances, furnished with nothing more than a bag of rice, a little opium, and a pot to draw water from the wells. The Tartar couriers also use it to sustain them, when compelled to travel night and day in crossing the arid deserts of Central Asia; and in some parts of the East it is administered as a restorative even to horses.

It is difficult to come to any definite conclusion as to whether the physical character of eastern

races who habitually use opium as a narcotic has deteriorated in consequence. No doubt the general belief is that even moderate indulgence must necessarily be injurious, and it is easy to point to the enervated character of the Turks and other oriental races as a probable result of the habit. But at the same time it is a disputed point among physiologists how far this belief correctly represents the truth. The opinions of many men well acquainted with the East might be quoted in opposition to it; for example, Dr Eatwell, formerly of the East India Company's service, in writing to the *Pharmaceutical Journal*, has affirmed that, as regards the great mass of the Chinese, no injurious effects of the opium they consume can be noticed, the people being generally a muscular and well-formed race. Dr Macpherson has given similar testimony in respect to the Chinese, and Dr Burnes in respect to the natives of Scinde and Cutch; whilst, on the other hand, Dr Little of Singapore is of opinion that the native population of that island would be in danger of becoming extinct from the use of opiates, were it not constantly recruited by immigration. It is, however, evident that the question can only be satisfactorily answered by knowing the real extent to which opium-eating prevails among the different eastern populations, and of this no reliable statistics can be obtained.

There is a similar want of definite information in respect to the United Kingdom. Attention was partially drawn to the subject so long ago as 1844, by an inquiry that was made into the state of large towns in Lancashire; and since that time there is every reason to believe that the evil has largely augmented. The increase in the quantities of the raw material imported would alone be sufficient to render this probable; for whilst, in 1852, the importation amounted to 114,000 pounds, it had grown to 356,000 pounds in 1872. No doubt a large portion of this enormous quantity is employed in the manufacture of morphia or other alkaloids, and is either exported or employed for legitimate medicinal purposes; but it is difficult to account for an increase in twenty years of two hundred per cent., except on the supposition that the drug is *more largely used as a narcotic than is generally believed*. The facility with which this form of vice can be concealed, renders direct evidence on the subject difficult to obtain; but such evidence as can be procured tends to prove that the above supposition is correct. We have recently been informed by the medical attendant to the workhouse in one of our larger cities, that a week rarely passes without a case of opium-eating coming to his knowledge among those who seek admission to the workhouse; and that he has known women, when suffering from the depression consequent upon their enforced abstinence, even go down on their knees to beg that he would administer to them an opiate. Again, there is reason to believe that opium is a favourite stimulant with many underfed and overworked artisans and labourers; and from inquiries made by parochial officials, clergymen, and others, this would appear to be especially the case in agricultural districts. In the fenny districts of Lincolnshire, a belief being prevalent that opium acts as a preservative against the effects of a damp climate, many of the inhabitants have in this way become addicted to its use.

Another and even more reprehensible form of the opium evil among the lower classes is to be found in the practice of administering soothing mixtures to young children for the purpose of keeping them quiet. In one instance, a mother, because her child was unwell, has been known to place a piece of crude opium in its mouth to suck, the death of the child being naturally the consequence; and though cases of such gross and culpable ignorance as this are no doubt rare, it is certain that the administration of soothing sirups and cordials is too commonly resorted to. In large manufacturing towns, where mothers are often employed in factories during the day, their infants are frequently placed for the time in the care of nurses; and these women seldom feel any compunction in administering an opiate to a child who is troublesome. It cannot be too widely known how greatly such a practice tends not only to the direct increase of infant mortality, but also to the permanent injury of the constitution, by inducing convulsions and other similar nervous diseases.

Opium in one of its forms enters largely into the composition of many of the pain-killers and patent medicines so freely advertised for domestic use in the present day, and for this reason the greatest care is needed in having recourse to any of them. Taken, perhaps, in the first instance, to alleviate the torments of neuralgia or toothache, what proves to be a remedy soon becomes a source of gratification, which the wretchedness that follows on abstinence renders increasingly difficult to lay aside. The same must be said of narcotics, such as bromide of potassium and hydrate of chloral, frequently resorted to as a remedy for sleeplessness; the system quickly becomes habituated to their use, and they can then be relinquished only at the cost of much suffering. Indeed, the last-mentioned of these two drugs obtains over the mind a power which may be compared to that of opium, and is, moreover, liable to occasion the disease known as chloralism, by which the system ultimately becomes a complete wreck.

Looking at the whole question of the medicinal use of narcotics, it is perhaps not too much to say, that they should never be employed except with the authority of a competent medical adviser.

Turning again to the narcotics of savage or but semi-civilised races, we find a species of fungus (*Amanita muscaria*) employed by the natives of Kamtschatka and the adjoining provinces of Siberia. It grows plentifully in parts of Kamtschatka, and is there generally prepared for use in several ways. The inhabitants either gather it during the hottest months, and hang it in strings to dry in the open air, or leave it to ripen and dry in the ground, when it possesses stronger narcotic qualities. Small-sized specimens, covered with warty excrescences and deeply coloured, are also considered more valuable than the smooth pale ones. Sometimes it is eaten in soups and sauces, or is taken mixed with the juice of the whortleberry; but the more usual method is to swallow it whole, rolled into the form of a pill, and a single large-sized toadstool thus taken is sufficient to cause the narcotic effects during a whole day. These bear a very close resemblance to those of ordinary intoxication, and, like them, often end in complete insensibility. Whatever may be the natural temperament of the individual shews itself with unusual distinctness. A man who is fond of music

or of talking will be constantly singing or chattering; and secrets often thus slip out, the disclosure of which is the source of much subsequent trouble. In this form of narcotism, too, the power of estimating the size of objects is temporarily destroyed, so that a man wishing to step across a straw or a small twig will raise his foot as though about to step across the trunk of a tree.

The Siberian fungus is not the only narcotic in which this last peculiarity is found. Similar erroneous impressions are caused by the Indian hemp, which, though it is used in south-western Asia, and indeed, in the Brazils as well, is more properly the narcotic of the African continent, where it is known to the native races from the Mediterranean to the Cape of Good Hope. It is the same plant that is grown in Europe for the sake of its valuable fibre; for, though probably indigenous to India, it is able, like the potato and the tobacco plant, to adapt itself to a great variety of climates, and is grown even in the north of Russia. Its narcotic virtues depend on a resinous substance contained in the sap; and this is much more abundant in tropical climates than it is in temperate. Indeed, the European plant is almost devoid of it, though it possesses a strong odour which has been known to make people ill who have remained long in a hemp-field. Thus, when the dried plant is either smoked or eaten, its effects are both rapid and powerful. In Morocco, where the dried flowers are generally smoked, a single pipe not larger than an ordinary tobacco-pipe is sufficient to intoxicate. Among the Arabs and Syrians, the usual method is to boil the leaves and flowers in water mixed with butter to the consistence of a syrup, which is called *haschisch*, and as it has an extremely disagreeable taste, is eaten in a confection of cloves, nutmegs, and other spices. But however the narcotic may be used, the pleasure it affords is much the same in character. It has been described as consisting in 'an intense feeling of happiness, which attends all the operations of the mind. The sun shines on every thought that passes through the brain, and every movement of the body is the source of enjoyment.' But the most remarkable peculiarity of the Indian hemp has yet to be mentioned: a dose of the resin has been known to occasion that strange condition of the nervous system called catalepsy, in which, notwithstanding the force of gravity, the limbs of the unconscious patient remain stationary in whatever position they may be placed.

The use of the coca-tree as a narcotic in Peru and Bolivia is of very great antiquity. When the Spaniards landed under Pizarro, they found the natives chewing the dried leaves, in exactly the same way in which they have continued to chew them down to the present day. Efforts were indeed made, soon after the subjugation of the country, to put a stop to the practice, for the plant had acted an important part in the Peruvian religious ceremonies, and its use was looked upon by the conquerors as an obstacle to the spread of Christianity. Nevertheless, the Indians persevered in spite of every prohibition and severity. Before long, too, the owners of mines and plantations discovered that it was to their interest to connive at the habit, as, with its aid, their labourers were able to perform more work on a given quantity of food than they could do without it. It has thus gradually

become the universal custom to allow from fifteen to thirty minutes, three or four times a day, for the purpose of chewing. At these times the first object of the Indian is to make himself as comfortable as possible, for the coca fails to produce its effect unless the chewer be perfectly quiescent. He stretches himself at full length in the shade, on a couch of dry leaves or soft turf, and rolling a few of the coca-leaves into a ball, conveys them into his mouth; adding immediately, to bring out the full flavour, a small quantity of unslaked lime, or of the alkaline ashes of certain plants. When thus engaged, the apathy he displays to everything around him is something marvellous. No entreaty on the part of his employer will induce him to move, and if he be a confirmed *coquero*, he is indifferent even to drenching rain or the roar of wild animals in the neighbouring thicket. In what way the pleasures of the coca-leaf manifest themselves is not known, but they must evidently be of a very seducing kind, thus to render men insensible to personal danger.

Notwithstanding the wide prevalence of the use of narcotics, little or nothing is known of the way in which their different effects are produced on the system; and the problem is complicated by the number of active substances that enter into their composition. Opium, besides other more ordinary ingredients, contains no fewer than eleven peculiar organic compounds, all of which are believed to share in producing its usual effects. It has, however, been noticed that many symptoms of narcotism bear a close resemblance to those of insanity. The wild laughter of a man under the influence of the deadly nightshade cannot be distinguished from that of a maniac, and the false impressions as to the size of objects, caused by the Indian hemp and the Siberian fungus, are a permanent feature in the malady of many lunatics. It has been suggested by Dr Carpenter that much light might be thrown on the connection between the mind and the body by studying the phenomena of drunkenness, and it seems probable that those of narcotism in different parts of the world might be made to yield equally rich results. Of one thing we may be quite certain. The use of tobacco has become a positive vice. The wastefulness of money which it causes, without a compensatory advantage, is alone deplorable.

### PENNY ICES.

In going through the busy streets of London, one cannot help noticing a new trade that has been struck out—the sale of penny ices, conducted by means of wheeled barrows on the side of the thoroughfare. Likely enough, the vendor is surrounded by spendthrift little boys, who lap in the frozen ‘cream’ as blissfully indifferent to its composition as they are unconcerned about the process by which the phenomenon of freezing is brought about under a broiling sun. This happy indifference is not exactly confined to young gentlemen who take their refreshment at barrows in the streets, and perhaps it is as well that it should not be. As a general rule, it is perhaps better not to inquire too closely into the production of what we eat and drink. But the freezing of cream at a time of year when dogs are popularly supposed to go mad from heat, and

people are every day falling down from sunstroke, is a phenomenon of so striking a character, that, but for our familiarity with it, it would probably arrest the attention of most of us.

It is one which certainly ought to arrest attention, for it is one which illustrates in a very interesting way not only the operation of natural forces which are continually working mighty and innumerable changes on the face of the earth, but—what will probably strike most minds as something even more curious and interesting still—it shews how the Creator has, as it were, interposed to check the too violent operation of His own laws, and to arrest the rapidity of changes which, without some such check, would speedily reduce this beautiful earth of ours to a condition of chaotic ruin and utter desolation.

Nothing can be simpler than the actual process of freezing adopted by our locomotive manufacturers of penny ices, and indeed by confectioners generally. It consists merely in putting into a metal cylinder whatever is to be frozen—new milk, fresh eggs, loaf-sugar, and fresh butter, are the ingredients which the Confectioners’ Journal gives for ice-cream—surrounding it with equal quantities of broken ice and salt, and rapidly spinning it round, so as to produce a little friction.

Now, everybody knows, or may know by trying it, that ice alone would not freeze the contents of the cylinder. It would simply melt slowly away, of course making whatever was near it very cold, but not cold enough to freeze. Indeed, it would seem ridiculous to suppose that the temperature which would melt the ice could possibly freeze the cream that was in the middle of it, especially when we raised that temperature by causing friction. Common-sense might suggest that while the cream got colder, the ice and the water around it would get slightly warmer, and that the result would be the immediate temperature of the two.

The supposition, however, would not be nearly so ridiculous as it would appear, and common-sense would be quite wrong as to the facts of the temperature.

The cream certainly will not freeze with ice alone around it, but it will come a great deal nearer to freezing-point than might be expected; for, although it will keep on giving out its heat to the surrounding ice, it will not make the ice in the slightest degree warmer, even though the process be aided by friction. So long as a particle of ice remains unmelted, the ice itself and the water it is in will stand at one fixed temperature, however much heat may be imparted to it; and unless the cream is in contact with something that ever communicates warmth to it, it will continue to get colder and colder so long as an atom of ice remains near it.

The explanation of this is to be found in a law which, like that of gravitation and many other natural laws, we can see in operation, without in the least degree comprehending it. The law is this: that where a solid body like ice becomes a fluid body like water, a certain amount of heat is always absorbed and concealed by the fluid. In the same way, when a liquid like water becomes a vapour like steam, a certain amount of heat is absorbed and concealed by the steam. The cream in the cylinder gives out its heat to the ice; but instead of the heat making it warmer, it helps to melt the ice, and then totally disappears in the

water. It does not make the water warmer any more than it did the ice; it is hidden or *latent* heat. It cannot be detected in any way either by the sense or by the thermometer; but it is quite certain that it is there, and if we convert the water back again into ice, it will immediately make its appearance, and will affect the thermometer.

A solid is never converted into a liquid, or a liquid into a vapour, without the consumption of more heat than would be required to effect the change, if it were not for this mysterious provision of nature; and if we can contrive to produce the rarer body from the denser—the liquid from the solid, or the vapour from the liquid—very rapidly and abundantly, as we do when we mix ice and salt together, and set a metal cylinder rapidly revolving in the midst of it, everything near it, including the cylinder and its contents, will be speedily robbed of its warmth, and reduced to a temperature below freezing-point.

Thus it is, then, that we are able to produce frozen cream in the London streets during 'dog-days.' We take advantage of two natural laws, with one of which everybody is familiar enough. Everybody knows that when water is reduced in temperature to 32° Fahrenheit it becomes ice, and that when ice is exposed to a temperature above 32° it is converted into water. Everybody knows that from the surface of the ocean water rises into the air in the form of vapour; that when the vapour comes in contact with something colder than itself, such as a stratum of cold air or the top of a mountain, it condenses into clouds, and if still further chilled it falls in the form of rain, or as snow, sleet, or hail, to be again melted and evaporated. But, by itself, the law which effects these changes would bring about the most disastrous consequences. It would produce them all by a series of violent shocks, which would often be more terrible and destructive than earthquakes. Seventeen volumes of water will expand into about eighteen volumes of ice; and even with the slow and gradual process of freezing which nature has arranged for us, we see that water-pipes are burst, vessels of all kinds, from bottles to reservoirs, are riven and cracked, and even rocks and mountains are rent and torn by the irresistible force of the expansion. But suppose all this took place instantaneously; that the first cold gust of wind that swept across a body of water after it had cooled to 32° froze it at once into a solid mass; or that the water filling a crevasse in a mountain-peak were thus suddenly congealed and expanded; or that the tremendous volumes of water that are often rolling over our heads in the form of clouds were liable at any moment to congeal into ice, and come crashing down by the ton! And a thaw would often be even more ruinous than a frost. An accumulation of snow and ice on a mountain-peak or a rising ground, or even a house-top, would be simply a reservoir liable to burst at any moment, and come down in overwhelming and devastating torrents. All these and a thousand other disasters are prevented by the wise and beneficent interposition of the other law which we see at work on the ice-vendor's barrow.

Nature ordains that in every fluid a certain amount of heat shall be hidden away as a reserve force, to be brought out wherever there is a danger of too sudden a change. Nobody could tell that

the heat was there; but the moment the surrounding cold becomes so great that the fluid is in danger of being suddenly congealed into a solid, the latent heat at once betrays itself, mitigates the cold, and renders the process a slow and gradual one. On the other hand, the solid which the ice-vendor puts around his tins no sooner begins to dissolve, than the fluid it produces begins to absorb heat with such rapidity that everything around it is robbed of its warmth, and liquefaction is arrested. The change, which but for this would have been almost instantaneous, is effected slowly and by degrees; and if, notwithstanding this loss of heat, we still keep up a rapid thaw by adding salt to the ice, and by revolving the vessel, the cream within it, and everything else around, must be laid under contribution, and must part with its warmth, even though it be frozen hard, and that in a sultry thoroughfare on a broiling August afternoon.

### HE GIVETH HIS BELOVED SLEEP.

BY ANTONIA DICKSON.

A LITTLE child rests on a bed of pain,  
With an aching head and a throbbing brain;  
A feverish flush on the soft cheek lies,  
And a wistful look in the sweet blue eyes,  
As the sick child moans: 'How the slow hours creep!  
Will the Lord not send to His little one sleep?'

And the mother smoothed from the child's brow fair  
The clustering locks of her golden hair,  
And murmured: 'My darling, we cannot tell;  
But we know that the Father doth all things well;  
And we know that never a creature in pain  
Addressed a prayer to His mercy in vain.  
Time has no line that His hand may not smooth;  
Life has no grief that His love cannot soothe;  
And the fevered brow shall have rest at last,  
In the healing shade from the Death Cross cast.  
Look up, my precious one; why shouldst thou weep?  
The Lord giveth aye to His loved ones sleep.'

And the little one gazed with a glad surprise  
In the loving depths of those patient eyes,  
Then lifted her lips for one long embrace,  
And turned with a smile on her weary face.

And the mother smiled as the early morn  
Marked the deep peace on the childish form,  
And cried aloud in her thankfulness deep:  
'The dear Lord be praised, Who hath given her sleep!'

Ay, mother—she sleeps, in that charmed repose,  
That shall waken no more to earth's pains and woes,  
For the Saviour hath gathered His lamb to His breast,  
Where never life's storms shall her peace molest.  
His dear love willed not that Time should trace  
One sorrowful line on that innocent face;  
Others, less favoured, might suffer their share  
Of the midnight toil and the noontide glare;  
Others might labour, others might weep,  
But 'the Lord giveth aye to His loved ones sleep.'

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH.  
Also sold by all Booksellers.